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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Members Present

Andy Hanson
Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Diana Wadley
John Doyle
Kevin Renz
Sandi Andersen
Tamara Thomas
Todd Reynolds

Representing

for Scott Sutherland, City of Mount Vernon
Skagit County Health Department
Ex-Officio, Department of Ecology (present by phone conference)
Town of La Conner
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste
Vice-Chair/City of Anacortes
District 2 Citizens
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers

Members Absent

Brian Dempsey
Leo Jacobs
Tim Crosby
Torrey Lautenbach
Not Represented

Representing

City of Burlington
City of Sedro Woolley/SWAC Chair
Haulers
Lautenbach Recycling/District 1
District 3

Visitors

Bob Raymond
David Bader
Elena Pritchard
Matt Koegel
Rick Hlavka

Representing

Lautenbach Industries
Skagit County Public Works/SW (recorder)
City of Anacortes
Green Solutions

Call to Order

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Introductions

Sandi Anderson, SWAC Vice-Chair, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business title introductions were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items. Diana Wadley, Department Of Ecology, attended the meeting by phone conference.

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Public Comments

Mr. Raymond commented that, in his review of the CSWMP, finds it complicated due to the large volume of the material included in the Plan. The public has no sense of how we are doing in those areas since there are no effective measures in place. Implementing a system to gather information on the variety of things suitable for the *blue bins* would probably be too costly. In lieu of collecting data, Mr. Raymond suggested focusing on improving established systems. One particular example would be to expand on the reception and collection aspects of organics. More of the general public might be interested in participating in a waste collection system if information and incentives were made available to them. The established recycling system could be more efficient if the public were educated on what organics are suitable for recycling by providing more resource contact information. Recycling resource awareness could be a low or no-cost partial solution to improving the recycling stream and to increasing the capture of who gets the yard waste in those parts where it hasn't penetrated.

Review and Approve Minutes

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, opened the floor to discuss the April 8, 2015 minutes. The error under the *Waste Reduction* section of page 3 of the March 11, 2015 minutes, which was addressed and re-worded in the April 8, 2015 minutes, needs to be re-addressed. The error contains the following sentence: *Mr. Hlavka suggested that in order to achieve this goal, that we increase recycling by implementing mandatory recycling in the county.* This sentence was not accurately reported in the March 11, 2015 minutes. Mr. Renz commented that these minutes should show that Mr. Hlavka said that we are still not on track with that statement and that mandatory recycling would be one method although not the preferred or suggested method. Mr. Renz suggested removing the sentence (in italics) entirely from the content of the March 11, 2015 minutes if everyone was in agreement.

The statements by Ms. Thomas in the April 8, 2015 minutes regarding her request to try to make the Plan a little more readable to lay-people was left out and should be included in the content of the April 8, 2015 minutes. That dialogue was re-visited and added to the content of the minutes under *Agenda Items / Items of Concern*.

A motion was made by Mr. Reynolds to approve the March 11, 2015 and April 8, 2015 minutes with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Andersen. The minutes were unanimously approved with noted corrections.

Agenda Items

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item: *Review of CSWMP, Chapters 3 & 4.*

Mr. Renz circulated copies of Chapters 3 & 4.

Mr. Hlavka began discussions by addressing the May 2, 2015 memorandum regarding Goals for the Skagit County Solid Waste Management Plan; and the attachment, 1.8 Goals and Objectives Of The SWMP from the original Plan. Review of the Goals section

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was skipped during the last meeting in order to allow the SWSGB to meet and provide their input on the general direction and vision for the Plan. Mr. Hlvaka commented that it is good to have Goals in the Plan, but the Plan is not being setup so that the recommendations are dependent on that. These are general goals that help set the framework of the Plan. Mr. Hlvaka solicited comments or revisions.

Ms. Thomas noted for the record that she submitted her comments by e-mail.

There was no further discussion regarding the Goals and Objectives section at this time.

Mr. Hlvaka began review of Chapter 3, Waste Reduction.

3.1 Preface to the Waste Reduction, Recycling and Organics Chapters. The Preface addresses several issues that are common to all of those topics including some State Law requirements. The Beyond Waste Plan also has some relevance to these chapters. The Preface also serves to provide background material. There were no comments.

3.2 Existing Conditions for Waste Reduction. This section notes some of the more important activities that are taking place in the county.

Other Activities

- The EnviroStars program: Ms. Pfaff-Denton commented that the Health Department has two programs. The Local Source Control program encourages businesses to use less toxic alternatives and also looks at waste reduction methods. The EnviroStars program helps recognize and promote businesses that have taken on waste reduction activities or implemented less toxic alternatives in their processes. Both businesses are closely linked but are two separate programs.
- The Fidalgo Island community...Fidalgo Island Gleaners...going to waste: Ms. Pfaff-Denton noted that Skagit Gleaners is active and is located in Mount Vernon and works throughout the valley.

3.3 Planning Issues for Waste Reduction. This is the format that will be used for the next couple of chapters as specific elements are addressed. The direction is to start with existing conditions, some background material by topic, planning issues and alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, and finally recommendations. The importance here is that if there isn't a problem noted under Planning Issues, then we miss the opportunity to put in place an alternative to solve it.

Yard Debris

Ms. Thomas inquired about the meaning of the last statement, "*Based on waste composition data from other areas, the waste stream typically consists of 2-4% of yard debris.*"

Mr. Hlavka stated that there is no data locally for Skagit County as to what is in the waste stream. He referred to the chart in Chapter 2 for the typical waste composition study compiled on garbage sorting by some counties.

Ms. Thomas requested to include the 2009 State wide study along with notation, *See Table 2-8.*

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3.4 Alternative Waste Reduction Strategies.

Alternative B-Focus on Wasted Food

Ms. Wadley requested to mention the EPA's food waste campaign. Mr. Hlavka agreed to mention it as a possible model that the county could pursue in the Alternatives.

Ms. Thomas inquired if these alternatives are just ones the county would pursue, or are they already in place elsewhere. Mr. Hlavka commented that it is alternatives that the county and cities may pursue, or the county could possibly take action to encourage private businesses to pursue.

3.5 Evaluation of Waste Reduction Alternatives.

This section contains ratings for feasibility and cost effectiveness of the alternatives listed. The goal with this effort is to arrive to the overall rating of High, Medium or Low and then base recommendations to pursue on that rating.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to whether there has ever been consideration into hiring private business to perform sorting on the tipping floor.

Mr. Renz commented that the public area at the incinerator was operated by Decker who gleaned material. At the time, the operation was not successful and another bid has not been re-considered.

Mr. Reynolds inquired about the possibility of doing a waste analysis to determine the type of commodities mixed in on the tipping floor.

Mr. Renz stated that it is unknown how much yard waste is in the solid waste stream since the transfer station has not done a waste study. The concern is, would the information compiled from a waste composition study be worth the time, effort and expense of performing the study. It would be beneficial to know if there is enough viable information from other entities that have performed the study to allow us to extrapolate out to ours for free. The Solid Waste fund cannot accommodate a waste study.

Alternative A-Ban Yard Debris from Garbage Disposal

Ms. Thomas addressed the option of putting in place a sur-charge on yard debris that might encourage a behavior change similar to that of a ban to help prevent it from being too contaminated to be accepted at the compost facility. Ms. Thomas suggested that we explore this option as an education tool to incentivize the public.

Mr. Renz commented that there is already a financial incentive in place for sorting of recyclables out of the waste stream, which is the tipping fee. The ban has a higher likelihood of success when customers are instructed to sort yard waste from mixed garbage or it can't be accepted. An extra 20% fee to accept it will not generate enough revenue to pay for the operation's labor to sort it with the existing staff. When the waste comes to the transfer station and we charge a surcharge, the waste still goes in the waste stream. A sur-charge will drive up a low amount of revenue but is not likely to change behavior as much banning the waste.

Ms. Thomas inquired if there is a low hanging fruit.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to why yard waste is being singled out when construction debris is a far larger percentage of the waste going through in comparison to yard waste.

Mr. Renz commented that the system at the Transfer Station, during all normal business hours, does operate as a surcharge system so a surcharge system is already in place.

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Ms. Thomas commented on the current recycling rate. Since we are going against the original thought of the goal to aggressively increase our diversion rate, what should change to get us from where we are right now.

Mr. Hlvaka responded that we are reviewing the waste reduction chapter now, and waste reduction by definition does not include recycling or organics, and therefore impossible to measure and have it apply to the recycling goal since it can't be measured. Nothing we are talking about in this chapter can help us get to that goal because we can't measure it. When we reach the organics and recycling chapters, those are the kinds of things that we can implement that will help us move beyond a 50% recycling rate. They are not measured in the annual survey conducted by Ecology because they are not there. Grass clippings handled through back yard composting, for example, is waste reduction and not recycling. A waste generation rate in any one area fluctuates due to economy and other factors and therefore cannot be used as a measure of success for waste reduction.

Ms. Thomas commented that we don't know what's effective but we do know on a waste generated per capita measurement whether there is less generated at a given time.

Mr. Renz commented that you can't tie that to a direct correlation to a waste reduction activity. The whole point of waste reduction is that you are taking a material that would go into the garbage or recycling stream and handle it in another fashion. It cannot impact our recycling goal of 50% because it is not counted towards anything that is in the waste or recycling component.

Mr. Hlavka commented that you can't measure that or apply that to a 50% goal because it's not there to measure.

Ms. Thomas commented that from an overall sustainability ranking, it really isn't the recyclable rate that you want to improve on, it's really the lack of landfilling or waste generation to be achieved.

Mr. Renz commented that one material can have different pathways within the system, this pathway does not impact the recycling rate, but is no less important. It is important because the material is being removed from the disposal stream.

Table 3-1 Ratings for the Waste Reduction Alternatives

Mr. Doyle inquired as to how the ratings were determined.

Mr. Hlavka responded that he arrived at the ratings based on discussions on page 3-10.

Feasibility / Cost Effectiveness:

Ms. Pfaff-Denton suggested monitoring the Feasibility or Cost Effectiveness rating on the banning of yard debris, dependent on quantity, if it results in the un-intended consequences of illegal dumping. Too strict of a ban could result in increased back-road dumping that will impact the community through tax increase.

Ms. Thomas questioned that since these can't be measured, and can't be shown how effective it is on any kind of scale, does the Cost Effectiveness belong.

Mr. Renz commented that it is not that the individual items cannot be measured, it is the impact of that versus the recycling rate that can't be measured.

Ms. Thomas suggested that since effectiveness and cost can be measured, that a measurement section be added so there is some level of determining the effectiveness of the programs that are in place.

Mr. Renz commented that he is unaware of how to create a measurement on wasted food.

Mr. Reynolds raised the question of how could you measure something that hasn't been implemented.

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Ms. Pfaff-Denton requested to add a statement that if these various activities are implemented, if there is something that can be measured, that we create a tally used to evaluate their effectiveness.

Ms. Thomas recommended that when or if they are implemented, there should be an attempt to access their effectiveness on a regular basis. She would like to see the Table removed or the addition of a clearer statement such as, *To Be Determined*.

Mr. Hlavka stated that some Alternatives listed in Table 3-1 are very clear on their cost effectiveness in the sense that they are not costing the county anything.

Ms. Thomas noted the Table's Cost Effectiveness "High" rating and asked Mr. Hlavka how he came by this assessment.

Mr. Hanson addressed their promotion of clothing re-use through sources such as Goodwill, etc. How can you measure its effectiveness if these same resources are throwing it away and it's going into the waste stream.

Mr. Hlavka was agreeable to remove the column of Cost Effectiveness from the Table 3-1 from Chapter 3 if it does not appear to be useful, and it is the consensus of the committee.

Mr. Renz commented that the cost to setup and run a workshop would be more costly than implementing a 2 year contract with a re-use vendor to set up a donation trailer on the Transfer Station site.

Mr. Renz suggested removing the Cost Effectiveness column and averaging ratings from the remaining columns.

Mr. Hlavka advised that deleting the *Cost Effectiveness* column will probably change the overall ratings and in theory change the priority levels of some of the recommendations. He agreed to make that change with the committee members being in agreement.

Diversion Potential:

Ms. Thomas inquired if the definition applies to the entire waste stream.

Mr. Hlavka replied that waste reduction is not expected to have a high payback for any of the waste reduction alternatives, due to their nature. He referred to the definitions on Page 3-10 specify the alternatives rating, their individual percentage, and how each is determined by the degree that it reduces the waste stream.

3.6 Waste Reduction Recommendations

These are brief statements about who the lead agency is and the cost of those. This information will appear in greater detail in the Implementation Chapter of the Plan which will show recommendations from all chapters.

WR5):

Ms. Wadley encouraged Skagit County to consider utilizing existing videos.

Mr. Hlavka suggested that her comment can be noted under the description of the *Alternative H*.

Mr. Hlavka began review of Chapter 4.

4.1 Definition And Goals For Recycling

The previous goal was to show improvement each year and eventually reach a 50% waste version as opposed to waste recycling. During the discussions at the last Governance

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Board meeting, it was suggested that we strive for a recycling goal of 65% and also that we continue to show progress.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to what the agreed upon timeframe was to achieve this goal.

Mr. Renz commented that a particular time frame was not discussed with the Board.

Over a 5-year planning period, the 15% improvement over the current plan, would essentially be a 3% per year increase and a realistic goal to achieve.

Mr. Renz inquired about the results of the City's efforts in increasing the curbside recycling rates every year. Ms. Andersen responded they are satisfied with their rate being at approximately 55-60%. That figure may change in the future with the use of a new recycler and the different size container options that will offered.

Mr. Hlavka commented that one of the recommendations coming from this chapter is to try to achieve the 65% goal and then include the date at that point.

Ms. Thomas inquired about the 65% goal and if the *Alternatives* were written with that figure in mind.

Mr. Hlavka commented that the *Alternatives* were written in part with that goal in mind and also with addressing planning issues, possible problems and service gaps.

4.2 Existing Recycling Programs

Curbside Programs

Ms. Thomas inquired as to how many customers are eligible or the number of households that these services are available to.

Mr. Renz commented that it is available to everyone West of Highway 9, along with higher density areas in the East County.

Ms. Pfaff-Denton commented that, relative to the first paragraph, she would like to see more discussion on curbside programs detailing what services are available in the cities.

Curbside recycling for mixed recyclables is mandated and part of garbage collection service but yard waste collection is optional in the city. Statistics on the resources handling the yard waste would give a snapshot of the services in place.

Mr. Hlavka commented that yard waste discussion will appear in the next chapter in Organics.

Mr. Doyle posed the question as to whether it is taken into account how much yard waste is going to other entities outside of the facility.

Mr. Hlavka responded that that information is being recorded by Ecology as part of their annual survey. In which case it would be included in the county's recycling rate numbers that appear in a graph in Chapter 2.

Urban-Rural Designation

Diana inquired as to whether it has been verified that urban and rural sites are being serviced according to the RCW.

Mr. Hlavka commented that yes he thought so and would check into that service for verification.

4.3 Designation of Recyclable Materials

Mr. Hlavka commented that this section is designed to help grease the wheels on permitting of recycling facilities. If the facility list contains something that is a "designated recyclable material" that facility should have an easier time getting permitted.

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Ms. Thomas inquired as to the purpose of grouping in High, Medium and Low priorities. Mr. Hlvaka commented that the designation of a recyclable materials leads to a requirement on the county and others to make sure that those materials can be collected in the county.

Ms. Thomas inquired to whether the Priority Level impacts a new facility on their decision to process a certain type of material listed.

Ms. Pfaff-Denton commented that the ratings helps direct the planners in setting up various recycling programs to focus on high or medium and more profitable materials.

Ms. Pfaff-Denton commented that it does not have any impact.

Mr. Hanson commented that this same type of list is viewed differently in other counties. In Skagit County, if it is not designated or on the list, it is not recyclable. In Skagit County it is viewed as a service level list, but it is not necessarily a recyclable item. If it is not designated in Skagit County comp plan, should it be shipped to California or elsewhere?

Mr. Hlvaka commented that the *High* priority rating of materials on this list indicates that it has to be collected. Someone has to collect it but it does not have to go to any particular facility. Any facility can refuse or accept any of these materials. Essentially, the rating would not make any difference to a facility.

4.4 Planning Issues for Recycling

C&D Recycling

Mr. Hlvaka raised the question as to whether the brochures for recycling opportunities for C&D are still be distributed with building permits.

Ms. Martin responded that the last revision was completed in 2011. One revision option being considered would be to print in-house with a change in update information only. Another consideration would be to out-source to create a “new look” that would incorporate all updates as well.

Mr. Doyle commented that when demolition projects trigger SEPA, only then will we implement deconstruction and jobsite recycling programs as a mandatory aspect of SEPA.

Announcements/New Business

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, opened the floor to address announcements or new business. None were addressed.

Public Comments

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, opened the floor to address any public comments. There were no public comments.

Unfinished Business

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, opened the floor to address any unfinished business. Reaching the 2-hour meeting deadline, the Members agreed to review the balance of Chapter 4 at the next SWAC meeting.

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Adjourn

Sandi Andersen, SWAC Vice-Chair, made a Motion to Adjourn. By a vote of the membership, the Motion passed unanimously. Vice-Chair Andersen thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.